



KATHERINE K. HANLEY
CHAIRMAN

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

Suite 530
12000 GOVERNMENT CENTER PARKWAY
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22035-0071

TELEPHONE 703/324-2321
FAX 703/324-3955
chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov

December 16, 2003

The Honorable Whittington Clement
Secretary of Transportation
Commonwealth of Virginia
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Secretary *Whittington* Clement:

I am writing you at the request of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to provide comments to you and the members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board regarding the Public-Private Transportation Act proposal by Fluor Daniel for the development, financing, design, and construction of the Capital Beltway High Occupancy Toll lanes. The Board reviewed this matter at its December 8, 2003, meeting and wish to provide our strong support of the project including the viable transit component, as feasible.

Many of the issues that we had raised in our July 31, 2002 letter regarding the Capital Beltway Study have been addressed by this proposal. One of the greatest concerns with the Beltway Study was the significant impact on approximately 300 homes and businesses. This proposal directly addresses our concerns by improving the mainline capacity while minimizing the takings to only six residences. Another was the development of alternative funding sources as a way to get the Beltway improvements moving in a timelier manner. The Board had even suggested HOT lanes as a possible alternative. The need to provide improved transit between Springfield and Tysons Corner was identified as important to Fairfax County. The availability of the HOT lanes on the Beltway is an integral part of providing this type of transit service. Even the need for better pedestrian and bicycle access across the beltway can be accommodated by providing sidewalks and trails on bridges when they are reconstructed.

The Board had the following additional comments for your consideration. These comments are made with the understanding that cost and impacts to homes,

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businesses and parks are considered, as well as transportation benefits in the decision making process.

While the intent to provide HOT lanes for transit to use is commendable, a more integrated approach needs to be developed for public transit to be fully incorporated into the HOT lanes initiative. Connections should be incorporated to provide access between the Metrorail stations in Franconia-Springfield and Tysons Corner. This would mean the inclusion of Phase VIII of the Springfield Interchange and possible access to proposed Tysons Metro stations. Intermediate access points at Braddock Road and Route 123 should be considered for HOV and transit with Route 29 provided for transit access to Dunn Loring Metro Station. Additional consideration should be made for transit transfer between the crossing arterials and an express bus system on the HOT lanes. In addition to design and operational consideration for transit, an allowance for funding transit service needs to be considered. At a minimum, toll collection revenue after bonds are satisfied should be used to support transit and other transportation improvements in the corridor.

The proposal indicates that with the additional lanes, the reduction in congestion will provide some improvement in safety. The weaving areas between the HOT lanes and the general purpose lanes requires some attention, especially if there is a 10mph difference in the posted speeds for the two facilities. This speed difference could even be greater if the HOT lanes are running more freely and the other lanes are congested. Consideration should be made to develop a design that uses separate entrance and exit ramps, similar to I-270 in Maryland, rather than the proposed weaving areas. The proposal should provide more information regarding safety of the 4' inside shoulder on the general purpose lanes.

To make the HOV truly a regional network, direct connections need to be made to all HOV facilities. This includes connecting the eastbound Dulles Toll Road HOV lanes directly into the proposed Beltway HOT lanes. Also to make the connection with the Shirley Highway HOV facility, Phase VIII of the Springfield Interchange would need to be completed.

The Route 123 interchange is the only interchange without collector-distributor (CD) roads. Provision for providing the CD roads should be explored to determine the impact to adjacent properties as well as

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pedestrian and bicycle access. The CD roads will provide for a smoother flow of traffic through this area on the mainline and help reduce the potential conflicts of the weaving traffic exiting and entering at Route 123.

- The need to provide adequate sound walls is essential to any improvement to the Beltway. While the proposal only replaces with like kind, it does state that any additional noise mitigation that is required of the EIS would be provided.
- This proposal assumes that utility relocation will be done as with any VDOT project without the additional fees normally associated with a private developer. If this is not true, then there would be additional cost to the project.
- The use of a non-competing clause is understandable but it needs to be well defined. There is a need to have flexibility to expand transit in the corridor and to improve parallel facilities. Additionally, safety and spot improvements on the Beltway should be allowed in the future without violating the non-compete clause.
- The improvements proposed to the I-495/I-66 interchange may not be adequate to address the safety and capacity issues for traffic exiting onto and from I-66 outside the Beltway. The I-66 Multimodal Transportation and Environmental Study only extends to Cedar Lane and was to tie into the improvements that were to be done by the Capital Beltway project. These improvements to I-66 should be considered with the others proposed under the HOT lane project.

The operation and safety of the Capital Beltway is a critical quality of life issue for the Washington Metropolitan Area, most particularly for those who live in close proximity to the roadway and those who use the Beltway daily. We support this proposed concept, with consideration given to our comments, as a viable option for improving the Beltway. This proposal has given consideration to minimizing impacts to the adjacent communities while providing additional traffic

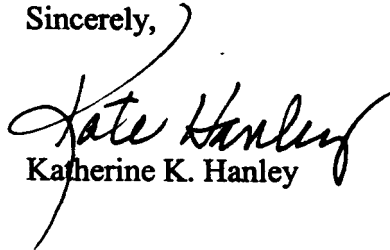
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capacity and transit opportunities in a timely manner, and these principles should guide in the development of this proposal. We appreciate your assistance and support in this and other critical transportation issues in Fairfax County.

Sincerely,



Katherine K. Hanley

KKH:lw

cc: Members, Commonwealth Transportation Board
Members, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Philip A. Shucet, Commissioner, Virginia
Department of Transportation
Karen J. Rae, Director, Virginia Department of
Rail and Public Transportation
Thomas F. Farley, District Administrator, Virginia
Department of Transportation
Young Ho Chang, Director, Fairfax County
Department of Transportation

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